The Rasa Dance

by Nataka Candrika dasi

Narrator: In the Srimad-Bhagavatam it is stated that the Rasa dance took place on the full-moon night of the Sarat season during Krsna's eighth year. When Krsna saw the full moon night of the Sarat season, He decorated Himself with various seasonal flowers, which are very fragrant. He remembered the gopi's prayers to the goddess Katyayani, wherein they prayed for Krsna to be their husband. He thought the full-moon night of the sarat season was just suitable for a nice dance and that the gopis desire to have Krsna as their husband would then be fulfilled.

[Krsna enters and plays His flute]

When Krsna played upon his flute the gopis all over Vrindavan became enchanted. Immediately upon hearing the vibration of his flute, they all left their respective engagements and proceeded to the spot where Krsna was standing. Some of them were engaged in milking the cows **[moo offstage]** but they left immediately and went to Krsna. Some were breastfeeding their small babies **(gopi holds doll)** and some were engaged in serving food to their family members **(gopi holds pot in hands)** Some even put the lower part of their dresses on the upper part and upper part on the lower part. Some of the gopis who were unable to go thought of Krsna within their minds.

(All gopis come before Krsna)

When all the gopis assembled before Krsna, He began to speak to them:

Krsna: O ladies of Vrindavan, I am very pleased that you have come. You are very fortunate and dear to Me. Now please order me. What can I do for you? What is the purpose of your coming here in the dead of night?

Narrator: Of course Krsna knew that the gopis had come to enjoy His company and to dance with Him. He continued to smile as he spoke.

Krsna: My dear friends, you must know that the forest is very dangerous at night. Tigers, bears, wolves and jackals are prowling. It is very dangerous for you. Please turn back without delay. **(pause)** I can understand that you have left your homes without permission and your family members must be very anxious. As chaste women, you must return to your homes and take care of your young children. Please, go back home.

Narrator: When Krsna spoke in this way the gopis became very sad.

They began to breathe heavily and draw various curved lines on the ground with their toes. They were unable to speak and simply stood there silently. **(pause)** Finally they managed to say:

Gopi#1: Krsna you are very cruel. You should not talk this way. We are your devotees.

Gopi#2: You are the Supersoul of all living creatures. Without Your presence our life is worthless.

Gopi#3: Dear Lord, our hearts have already been stolen by You. We can not return home and engage in family affairs.

Gopi#4: We do not ask You to accept us as Your wives. Simply accept us as Your maidservants.

Gopi#5: O dear friend, where is that women within the three worlds who is not captivated by the sound of Your transcendental flute?

Narrator: Upon hearing the anxious plea of the gopis, the Supreme Personality of Godhead began to smile and enjoy the company of the gopis **(they begin to walk with Him, doing various things like offering him a garland, holding His hand, etc.)** Soon, however, the gopis began to feel proud, thinking themselves to be the most fortunate women in the universe. Krsna, who is known as Kesava, could understand their pride and in order to show them His causeless mercy - He disappeared from the scene!!! **(Krsna exits)** When this happened, the gopis began to search for Him everywhere! They began to question the trees and plants in the forest.

Gopi#6: Dear banyan tree, have you seen the son of Nanda Maharaja passing this way, playing on his flute?

Gopi#7: Dear Tulasi, your leaves are always at His lotus feet. Will you kindly tell us where He has gone?

Gopi#8: Dear Kadamba flower, dear Malati flower, you are all very pious to be living on the bank of the Yamuna. Please tell us where He is!
(All gopis sing "Where is Krsna?" song by Yamini dasi)

Narrator: After searching here and there, the gopis began to talk like madwomen. They could only satisfy themselves by imitating the pastimes of Krsna. One gopi imitated child Krsna and one became Trnavarta carrying the small child into the sky.**(action)** Two gopis

imitated Krsna and Balarama and many others imitated their cowherd boyfriends.**(action)** One gopi imitated Bakasura and another forced her to fall down as the demon did when he was killed.**(action)** One gopi chastised Kaliya by saying: "You rascal Kaliya! I shall punish you severely! I have descended upon this earth to punish all kinds of miscreants!"

In this way, all the gopis were madly feeling the absence of Krsna. Not seeing Radharani however, they began to assume that Krsna had taken her away to a solitary place to enjoy her company.

Gopi#9: How could Krsna take her away, leaving all of us aside?

All gopis together: Because she is qualified and beautiful!

Gopi#10: Wait! Look over there! It's Radha and she is alone! **(gopis surround Radha)**

Radha: My dear friends, yes - I was alone with Krsna. But I became proud of my position and now He has left me!

Narrator: They became very sorry to hear that Radha was actually left alone by Krsna. Together, they began to proceed deeper into the forest.
(gopis begin to softly chant Hare Krsna)

Suddenly ... Krsna reappeared!!! **(Krsna enters)** Looking extraordinarily beautiful, Krsna took them hand in hand to the bank of the Yamuna River.
(They walk together, then stop.)

Krsna: My dear friends, you might be aggrieved by My words and acts. But you must know that I do this in order to increase your love for me. If I am very easily approached, one may think "Krsna is so easily attainable." But my dear friends, I am so much obliged to you that I can not treat you like ordinary devotees. Do not think I was away from you. I was simply testing you. Kindly excuse Me and know that it is not possible for Me to repay your love for Me.

Narrator: Thus, hearing the words of the Supreme Personality of Godhead, the gopis became very much pleased. So began the Rasa dance of Krsna and the gopis, the most beautiful and fortunate girls within the three worlds.
(Rasa dance begins).....